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Contact

Melissa Weber, Director of Communications

Phone: 320-589-6414, [weberm@morris.umn.edu](mailto:weberm@morris.umn.edu)

Jenna Ray, Editor/Writer

Phone: 320-589-6068, [jrray@morris.umn.edu](mailto:jrray@morris.umn.edu)

**Katia Vantries '13 receives community award for volunteer work**

*Summary: Vantries received the Miss Morris Community Award for her volunteer work with the elderly, an opportunity first afforded through UMM Students In Service.*

(October 19, 2011)-In July 2011, Katia Vantries '13, Morris, not only became a Miss Morris Area Ambassador but also received the Miss Morris Community Award for her volunteer work with the elderly, an opportunity first afforded through the UMM Students In Service program.

Vantries participated in the 2011 Miss Morris Area Scholarship Pageant, which is a local pageant within the Miss America organization. All young women who participate in the local, state, and national levels of Miss America competition must have a platform in which they are presenting. Vantries' platform was Inter-Generational Connections, which discusses her volunteerism with West Wind Village, the local nursing care facility. She received the first runner-up title, Miss Morris Area Ambassador, and was eligible as a pageant participant to receive the Miss Morris Community Award, which is based on the submitted platform statements. Vantries won the award both for her platform and for the volunteer experience she gained.

"After the competition is complete, the judges have to calculate all of the scores to determine the winners of the pageant. This process seems to take forever, especially backstage where nerves are high and all you know is that you put your heart into it and that was the best you could do," says Vantries. "When I heard my name echoed in the microphone, I overflowed with joy and excitement! And when I heard my name called for the [Miss Morris Community Service] award, I was very surprised and honored."

Vantries was given the opportunity to volunteer at West Wind Village through the AmeriCorps: Students in Service program. She contributed nearly 300 hours of volunteer service within a year, demonstrating her dedication and involvement with her platform.

"The concept behind my platform of Inter-Generational Connections is to bring people together from all ages and generations to build lasting connections and friendships," says Vantries. "I feel as if I have made progress towards this goal, and I will continue to spend my time volunteering at West Wind Village, since I am very passionate about working with the elderly, and this is a wonderful way to get involved in the community."

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